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Heaven

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Heaven

Jessica Fraidstern

Feature: Submission from a graduate of the class of '93.

I don't like to feel
starchy white sheets
that crack at the slightest touch.
I don't like to see metal bars,
cages really,
for protection.

I said good-bye to Grandmother
in her hospital bed.

She lay there, white
skin on white sheets.
Her head swallowed by the pillow,
creating a tiny indentation on its surface.
And those horrible clear tubes pushed up into her
nose,
as she lay struggling to breathe
artificial air.
I sat in the chair next to the bed,
our hands clasped through the bars.

Today I can still feel her hand.
It was chaffed from the daily scrubblings,
like a dishwasher's hand.

She hadn't washed a dish in months.
Her grip was weak, and yet
she held on to me with the force
of determination so strong
I could not move.
And I felt its warmth.

My hand engulfed hers.
She became lost in me.
as her hand vanished within mine, like
a child's palm will disappear inside her mother's.

I was ten and already I knew about death.
I was ten and already I doubted Heaven.